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Presidential Statement on Burundi - draft

The Security Council has with great attention listened to and discussed the report presented by its Mission to Burundi which visited Bujumbura on August 13 and 14, 1994, and to subsequent information from the UN Secretary-General.

The Security Council continues to be concerned with developments in Burundi. It has previously expressed its concern in its statement of 25 October 1993 (S/26631), 16 November 1993 (S/26757) and most recently of 29 July 1994 (S/PRST/1994/38).

The Security Council is of the view that Burundi's parliamentary and presidential elections of June 1993 offered a perspective for an equitable distribution of political power in the country. However, hopes generated by these elections were all but dashed when President Melchior Ndadaye was murdered during an attempted coup d'état on 21 October 1993, and by the following wide-spread massacres throughout the country.

The Security Council reiterates its condemnation of these events; it is astounded that those responsible both for the attempted coup d'état and for the subsequent massacres have not been brought to justice.

Since these tragic events, the people of Burundi have suffered additional major losses. President Cyprien Ntaryamira died in an air crash in Kigali on 6 April, 1994, and the carnage that followed in Rwanda has sent floodwaves of refugees into Burundi.

This accumulation of events only exacerbated the difficult social and political circumstances in Burundi, further heightening long-standing historical tensions between its Hutus and Tutsis and straining their coexistence. Nevertheless, political leaders of both ethnic groups and of the country's two "political families" have in recent months continued a dialogue on the political future of the country.

The Security Council appreciates that difficult but earnest negotiations are currently underway in Burundi which are aimed, among other, at definitively filling the post of the country's President. A number of other important political steps and appointments are contingent on accomplishing this task. Moreover, once a president is inaugurated, broader issues of governance will be addressed, so as to provide all sectors of the Burundi society both with an appropriate share of political influence and with the necessary sense of security.

The Security Council urges all parties to these negotiations to display the political will and wisdom necessary for a speedy resolution of the current impasse, and to make every effort to accomplish this objective by the scheduled date of August 26, 1994.

The Security Council is disturbed by reports of continuing violence in Burundi, which has included politically motivated assassinations and attacks on foreigners. It emphasizes that extremist or undemocratic solutions to the country's problems - no matter what their provenance - are quite unthinkable and would not be condoned by the international community. Burundi's ethnic groups are fated to live side by side. The Council has confidence that the people and leaders of Burundi will find such political solutions to the specific problems of their democracy that will prevent the emergence of a dictatorship, either of numbers or of guns.

The Council is furthermore alarmed by the scope of the humanitarian crisis Burundi faces. It appeals to States and NGOs to intensify humanitarian assistance to the country, and commends those who are already involved in this effort.

The Security Council also commends the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Bujumbura. The Council thanks leaders of Burundi for the hospitality they extended to the Council's recent Mission to their country.

The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter.